February 24, 1804

Wow, it is so cold here. Yesterday it was snowing all day long and our horse and carriage could not move because it had no traction. I’ve been teaching Johnny Tremain, the blacksmith’s son, how to write. He is a quick learner and is respectful to everyone. He has been very useful when we run into problems with the Indians because he knows how to communicate with them. Our dog snowball had six puppies and they have been finding all sorts of animals and other types of food for us to eat. This morning I woke up and saw the dogs out in the woods dragging a dead turkey back to camp. Using the cooking skills my beautiful wife Beverly taught me, I cleaned the turkey and got all of the meat out. This will last us about four days. Right now we are waiting for the storm to clear up and we are just about at The Caches. We have all divided the work evenly and my job is to gather the food and cook it.

Last week we found some very friendly Apache Indians down by the falls and Johnny convinced them to let us stay with them. We stayed with them for a couple of days and they taught us techniques about hunting and keeping the food good. We traded one of our six puppies for some warm clothes, Deer skin, and food. They also showed us how to purify the water from the rivers.

We have heard so many great things about Santa Fe. All of the Indians told us to make sure we had something to protect us from the “Santa Fe Bandits”. They have been attacking people for their food and money and they attacked a few groups of Conestoga Wagons and killed. We have made a joint decision and we decided not to take the Mountain Route but take the shorter route and try out Johnny’s Luck with communicating with the Indians. I will write again once we reach the Cimarron Cutoff.

P.S. Tell my daughter Stephanie to have a very wonderful birthday and give her the present in the attic that I told you about before I left.

By: James Isaac Neutron